

Sir George Simpson and the Mission for Hawaiian Independence 1840-1843

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During the years 1840-1843 Hawai'i was truly a cockpit of nations, a place where individuals, companies, and nations sought to carve out their place in the sun. Foremost among those competing for a stake in the Islands' future were the British and the Hudson's Bay Company. This essay sets out to examine how this London-based company and its North American Governor-in-Chief, Sir George Simpson, became the unlikely organizers of the mission which gained Hawai'i its first recognition as a sovereign state.

This English trading concern, which began to operate in Hawai'i in the 1820s, steadily expanded its relationships with the local government and trading community, developing a distinct outlook on Hawaiian trade and politics. For the Hawaiians and the Hudson's Bay agency in Honolulu the end objective was the same: to protect themselves from the bigger fish which sought to devour them—trading rivals in the Company's case, foreign powers in Hawai'i's. Sir George Simpson was to prove decisive in successfully combining with the Hawaiian politician Timoteo (Timothy) Ha'alilio and the American missionary William Richards, with the assistance of the Hudson's Bay Company in London, to push the idea of Hawaiian independence beyond what had been previously thought possible.¹ The group's accomplishments were made in the face of dogged opposition by a faction, centered on the British consulate in Honolulu, which sought to annex the Islands for Great Britain. This story, then, is of how both parties struggled to determine the Hawaiian Kingdom's future, and in their contest profoundly altered the attitude of the French, British, and American governments towards Hawai'i. We

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shall explore, in turn, the background of British policy towards Hawai'i and the nature of Hawaiian life and rivalries, before turning to the Mission for Independence itself and its successful outcome.

Britain's earliest presence in Hawai'i was overtly imperialistic. Captain James Cook's first contact with Hawaiian Islanders in 1778 was formalized into a British claim by the arrangement made by Captain George Vancouver with King Kamehameha I in 1794. This agreement took the form of a protectorate, with Britain gaining most-favored nation status in return for the protection her navy could afford. Such niceties, however, did nothing to stem the tide of traders, missionaries, whalers, freebooters, and naval deserters of all nationalities. Increasing competition for furs, whale products, and timber, led the Foreign Secretary George Canning to appoint Britain's first diplomatic representative to Hawai'i. In 1824 Richard Charlton arrived in dramatic fashion aboard H.M.S. *Blonde*, which bore the bodies of the Hawaiian King Liholiho (Kamehameha II) and his wife Kamamalu who had both died while on a state visit to England. Charlton and the ship's commander, Lord Byron (George Anson), were under orders to assert British sovereignty only if another nation threatened to intervene.² Over the succeeding 12 years Charlton came to believe these anomalous powers were inadequate. He grew conscious, like most Britons in Hawai'i, of the rapid pace of American immigration and particularly the influence American missionaries were exercising over the Hawaiian people as educators and translators.

At the time of Cook's contact, the Sandwich Islands, as they were then known, counted for little in British Foreign Office deliberations. Links with India and China were via the east. Travel westwards to Hawai'i was still done by sailing ship around the Horn or overland via New Orleans and Mexico to the Pacific. More importantly, the £40,000 total annual trade Hawai'i generated hardly justified the cost of maintaining a large British naval force to protect the archipelago. Sir Robert Peel, Conservative British Prime Minister from 1841-1846, expressed his government's determination not to expand its imperial ambitions into the northern Pacific:

I think upon the whole that the arguments against the immediate occupation of stations in the Pacific preponderate. We have constant expense and embarrassment which are caused by multiplying ports in various parts of the world, imposing in the Mother Country the obligations of . . . maintenance and contingent defense.³

Britain, claimed Lord Aberdeen, sought no special favors for its citizens in Hawai'i but did reserve the right to protect its people there. The British government wished:

... to see all foreigners residing in the Sandwich Islands treated on a footing of perfect equality before the law. . . . But upon that perfect equality and that protection, in regard to British subjects Her Majesty's Government must constantly and imperatively insist.⁴

This was essentially the position taken by Lord Edward Russell who obtained, with Richard Charlton's aid while he was in Hawai'i in 1836, the following guarantees from its government:

English subjects shall be permitted to come with their vessels, and property of whatever kind to the Sandwich Islands; they shall also be permitted to reside therein as long as they conform to the laws of these islands, and to build warehouses for their merchandise, with the consent of the King.⁵

At first glance it would seem as if English policy, consular practice, and native acquiescence to British activities in Hawai'i could be harmonized. However, the authority of the native monarch, Kamehameha III, was, in fact, one most foreigners obeyed only in the breach. Basic property rights, as understood under Western systems of law, were not readily accepted by the Hawaiians; constitutional rights enshrined in 1840 were still in their infancy.

Each foreign group accused the monarchy of favoritism towards its rivals. A popular target of French and British criticism was the American missionaries. They were seen on the one hand as properly Christianizing the country, while on the other hand conducting a campaign of surreptitious diplomacy in American's name.

Disputes over taxes, land, and business dealings often erupted into violence, owing to the absence of respect for the central authority. Preferential treaties, such as that signed between Hawai'i and Great Britain in 1836, or the kind engineered at the cannon's mouth by Captain C.P.T. Laplace of the French Frigate *L'Artemise* in 1839, only reduced the effectiveness of Hawaiian justice, fostering a paternalistic attitude towards the Native Hawaiian community. Increasingly, there were appeals to home governments for the arbitration of disputes.⁶

By 1840 the chorus of wounded national pride, lawsuits, and appeals for foreign intervention had reached such a pitch, it was clear a solution to Hawai'i's problems would have to be found soon if the Kingdom was not to collapse in chaos. Opinion divided between those who took an interventionist line, such as Charlton and the French Consul Dudoit, and merchants like the Hudson's Bay

Company who saw their interests better served by developing Hawai'i as an *entrepot*, where all could compete in peaceful trade.

The Hudson's Bay Company, which had established its first post at Honolulu in 1834, became increasingly involved in Hawaiian diplomacy as it expanded its operations. Over the next decade Sir George Simpson and most of the Hudson's Bay Company leadership rejected an imperialistic position. Simpson had learned from his North American experiences that co-operation could often bring the moderate profits the Company sought. He was to write from Hawai'i in 1842:

We must not . . . aim at a monopoly, of the business here. . . . I do not think we should enter into a larger export business, than may be necessary to give us a certain command of the shipping in these seas.⁷

From the late 1830s, as the Honolulu post's activities came under closer scrutiny in London, the Company's aims became twofold: to regularize and improve the nature of trade there, and to find a political solution which would ensure the survival of a successful business in Hawai'i. Regulating the post's activities, or at least making them conform to standard practices on the mainland, proved no easy task. The H.B.C. was dogged by irregularity of supply and the tyranny of distance from any other post. This created an insular market, highly dependent on the visits of foreign vessels and reliant on the local market when the ships did not call. Dealing with a varied clientele created misunderstandings often finding their resolution in open quarrels. Counterfeiting, pilferage, bootlegging, and private trading in company goods were just some of the problems faced. The militia of 600 men the Hawaiian Government relied upon were hard-pressed to curb the crime, idleness, and drunkenness which were unfortunately commonplace in the community.⁸

By the late 1830s it had become apparent to the Governing Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company in London that the Company's agent, George Pelly, was not filing complete reports and that huge debts were being run up on the Company's accounts. Pelly was stripped of his discretionary powers and ordered to lock up all Company merchandise and to restrict credit purchasing to reliable accounts.

A promising young trader named Alexander Simpson, a distant cousin of Sir George, was sent from Canada to help restructure the Company's Hawaiian operations. Simpson soon noticed the growing number of ships calling at Hawai'i, rising property values, and new

construction. He recommended expanding the Company's operation in Hawai'i to handle both a growing local and re-export market.⁹

By 1841 Governor Sir John H. Pelly and the Hudson's Bay Committee had become sufficiently interested in Alexander Simpson's reports to offer Sir George's services in his forthcoming visit to the Pacific, should the Foreign Office wish to annex the Islands. Pelly cited their relevance to the Indian and China trades and the Oregon Boundary dispute. British intervention would forestall French or American influence and cement the Hawaiian Crown's attachment to Great Britain, reasoned Pelly.

Colonial Secretary Russell's reply to the Hudson's Bay Company's proposal was succinct, "H. M. Government do not contemplate any *new* acquisitions at present on the part of the Crown . . . either on the shores, or among the Islands of the Pacific."¹⁰ This statement put Sir George Simpson's forthcoming visit to Hawai'i on an altogether different course. It can be said that, from this point on, the Hudson's Bay Company was willing to consider a variety of new options for Hawai'i's future. Sir George Simpson arrived at Honolulu on 10 February 1842 in the dual guise of businessman and diplomat to investigate and report on Island affairs to the Company and the Foreign Office.

Whatever conclusion the powers in Whitehall and Hudson's Bay House might draw about Hawai'i, for many British residents in Hawai'i the idea of a protectorate was not one they would readily abandon. Consul Richard Charlton and prominent traders such as Henry Skinner were both personally involved in lengthy land disputes with the Hawaiian authorities whose authority they disdained.¹¹ Charlton's response as his legal entanglements thickened was to vow the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom and all those who opposed him. According to George Pelly, Charlton was a law unto himself and kept

. . . an armed mob well primed with liquor to set the laws and Government of defiance and try to influence the masters and crews of the whalers to second them.¹²

His imperious behaviour had never endeared him to Honolulu residents: his cattle trespassed onto neighbors' land; he was once fined five dollars when his dog bit a foreign woman; and he was fined six dollars for horse-whipping James J. Jarves, American editor of the widely read *Polynesian* newspaper.

Charlton managed to round up 35 discontented Britons who had cases before the Hawaiian courts or other grievances. In a petition

to Whitehall they blamed unfair judgments on the Americans who occupied most of the jury places. Singled out for special derision was the Hudson's Bay Company, described in scathing terms:

That grasping and avaricious body, (which has cast its longing eyes on this beautiful Archipelego, and by making large advances of money to the native King and Chiefs, has endeavoured to obtain influence and control over them . . .).¹³

Among the signatories to the petition was Alexander Simpson. This promising young Englishman, whom Sir George Simpson once described at "well educated, attentive to business . . . correct in conduct and private character," had quit the Company's service, citing his incompatibility with George Pelly and the death of his brother Thomas, the Arctic explorer, on a Company expedition.¹⁴ In June 1840 he headed for London to learn the cause of Thomas' mysterious death and to lay claim to a pension the Company had promised to his brother before his demise. On his return to Hawai'i in 1841, Simpson intended to resume his duties but found that his vacancy had been filled by a new agent, George Trail Allan. Simpson attributed his replacement to the machinations of his distant cousin Sir George Simpson, whom he claimed had sent his brother to his death and now had the effrontery to withhold Alexander's inheritance from him.¹⁵

By the time Sir George Simpson arrived in Honolulu, Charlton, Alexander Simpson, and most of the British community in Honolulu were ready and waiting to pour scorn on any approach save the outright annexation of Hawai'i. Simpson was to prove their match.

Sir George quickly became aware of strife within the foreign community. He felt genuine sympathy towards a ruler and his people placed in a no-win situation:

. . . worried to interfere in every squabble that takes place between sections or individuals of the mercantile community, being sure to be abused at least by one party for its interposition, or perhaps by both for its neutrality.

Politics and religion observed Simpson were

merely a cloak thrown over more sordid motives. Rivalry in trade often lurks at the root of the evil. . . . The social result of whole is this, that one half of all strangers in this strange land are not on speaking terms with the other half.¹⁶

This ill feeling found its outlet in civil suits and court actions, although ironically, noted Simpson, such divisions within the foreign community were the only thing which prevented them from turning their united wrath upon the Hawaiian rulers.

The Hawaiians were only too keenly aware of their vulnerability and desperately sought an individual with sufficient wealth and influence to plead their case for sovereignty in Europe and America. Simpson had been knighted in 1841 for success both as a fur baron and in securing the deal with the Russian-American Company, and was recognized by both the business and diplomatic communities. Perhaps, reasoned the Hawaiian leaders, he might succeed where other businessmen had failed.¹⁷

Plans to develop Hawai'i with the aid of foreign and Hawaiian capital, provided Hawai'i remained independent, were uppermost in the minds of the Hawaiian officials when they greeted Sir George Simpson at Lāhainā on 17 March 1842. Simpson found the Hawaiians engaging and open, with the person he called the Governor of Maui, and Timoteo Ha'alilio, the King's secretary, singled out for their abilities. Charlton and the American missionary William Richards, translator to the King since 1823, were, on the other hand, seen as unhelpful. Charlton, Simpson said, should be pensioned off and replaced with a more capable British representative, whereas Richards was at first suspected of being an American agent.¹⁸ Nonetheless, an arrangement was worked out between the King, his advisors, and Simpson. Sir J. H. Pelly, Simpson, and Andrew Colville of the Hudson's Bay Company, Timoteo Ha'alilio, and Richards were granted letters of credence to act as representatives for the Kingdom, with a letter of credit to finance the mission worth £10,000 being offered by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was decided at a meeting attended by the King, the Queen Regent, O'ahu Governor Kekuanaoa, Richards, and Simpson, that Richards would proceed to Washington and put the case for independence before the administration of President Tyler. In November or December of 1842 he would then join Simpson and the Hudson's Bay executive in London to launch their assault upon Whitehall and the Quai d'Orsay in Paris.

Simpson appears to have considered any option which would enhance the Hudson's Bay fortunes in Hawai'i. He described the Hawaiians as:

... disposed to sell their country to Great Britain or to a joint stock company for a pecuniary consideration, in the shape of pensions to the King and Chiefs for a certain number of lives.¹⁹

He speculated on the attractions of local agriculture and the large expanse of land as yet unexploited:

We should be empowered to treat with foreigners either Government, Joint Stock Companies or Individuals, for the selling, granting or leasing of lands. . . . I think the

Islands present a very favourable and wide field for the employment of foreign capital and enterprise, and that the Government should afford every faculty and encouragement for the introduction of such.²⁰

Simpson suggested to Sir John H. Pelly that the Honolulu post's prospects might be improved if Hawai'i was sold to Russia in return for trading privileges.²¹ Nothing came of such speculation, and it only underlined the problems faced by any Hawaiians in convincing foreign governments that independence was something more than a trojan horse for land schemes or a cover for some rival's territorial ambitions.

The mission officially began, and Richards and Ha'alilio left for the United States on 18 July 1842, arriving in Washington on the fifth of December. Secretary of State Daniel Webster seemed somewhat surprised at their winter arrival and suggested they would have better luck pursuing their case in London. Richards drew up a note to remind the Secretary of State of the five to seven million dollars of annual American trade with Hawai'i and the three to four million dollars invested by its citizens in Hawaiian property.²² After waiting a week for a reply, Richards and Ha'alilio saw Webster on 23 July and discovered he had not read their letter. Richards then told Webster Hawai'i would seek to renew its status as a British protectorate. This produced the desired result, with Webster declaring that America took the lead in recognizing Hawaiian sovereignty and that "no power ought to seek undue control over the existing government, or any exclusive privileges or preference in matters of commerce." Put another way, it was President Tyler's wish to establish a trade route to China, and he was not keen to enter into agreements restricting U.S. expansion into the Pacific.²³

While Richards and Ha'alilio were vainly pursuing a guarantee of sovereignty in Washington, Sir George Simpson and Sir John H. Pelly were busy laying the ground work for a favorable hearing at the British Foreign Office. Their rival, Richard Charlton, had already arrived in London and was busy filling Foreign Office files with grievances and descriptions of the crooked puppet government run in Hawai'i by American missionaries. Only the fact he had abandoned his post without Foreign Office approval, and had appointed Alexander Simpson in his place without the Hawaiian government's permission, prevented Charlton from sabotaging the Mission's case before it was even put.²⁴

Meanwhile, in Honolulu, Alexander Simpson took every opportunity offered to him to undermine the Hawaiian government's

credibility. He wrote to the British Foreign Secretary Aberdeen how Dr. Gerrit P. Judd, the King's Treasurer, and a man appointed upon Sir George Simpson's recommendation, had given Richards unlimited power to negotiate whatever he wished. Supposedly, Richards had been furnished with blank sheets of paper, bearing Kamehameha's signature, which he was to fill in at his leisure. Kekuanaoa and Dr. Judd countered, stating how Alexander Simpson had threatened them and circulated defamatory statements about Sir George Simpson. They pleaded with the Foreign Office to remove the Acting Consul, while they laid charges against him for opposing the laws and peace of the Hawaiian Kingdom.²⁵

Sir George Simpson was determined Aberdeen should not imagine the mission to be a form of U.S. annexation in disguise, and he wrote a forceful note to this end, extolling the benefits international co-operation in the form of Hawaiian sovereignty would bestow upon Great Britain. Simpson and Richards jointly recounted the contribution the missionaries had made in advancing the Islands towards a Western form of government. Improvements in education, law, and commerce all might prove transitory if the anomalous and precarious nature of Hawai'i's relationship with the outside world was not soon resolved. Foreign intervention, they claimed, had been a source of constant embarrassment to Hawai'i's rulers, "and the evils may be expected to increase with increasing intercourse of his subjects with foreigners."²⁶

Following a brief introduction of themselves and their case to the Foreign Office in February, Simpson, Richards, and Ha'alilio then made their way to Belgium. There they received the support of King Leopold and his government for Ladd and Co.'s land scheme, and on 17 March 1843 they called on the French Prime Minister Guizot in Paris. The combination of the stocky Simpson, the gaunt missionary Richards, and the dark-skinned Ha'alilio must have struck the urbane Frenchman as an odd trio, but he was sufficiently impressed with the case they presented to declare his support for Hawaiian independence. This swift acquiescence may have been prompted by the simultaneous news of the French capture of Tahiti. The Society Islands, not the Hawaiian archipelago, were the principal targets of France's ambitions, and Guizot probably was eager not to worsen Anglo-French relations.²⁷

It was thus a confident Simpson who returned to Whitehall at Aberdeen's invitation on 25 March where he was questioned about the manner and substance of Guizot's remarks and about the character

of Richards and the American missionaries. After a week of deliberation, Aberdeen presented the mission with the news they had come so far to hear: the British government would follow the French lead in recognizing Hawaiian independence.²⁸

The conditional nature of the British and French responses would soon become apparent, but for the moment a feeling of joy and accomplishment prevailed. At Hudson's Bay House in London there was quiet satisfaction at another successful foray into the world of diplomacy.

Two days after Lord Aberdeen announced his decision, Sir George Simpson was on his way back to Canada to resume management of the Company's great fur empire. He left Richards and Ha'alilio to settle the final formalities, now fully confident of their ability to handle the final negotiations. Initially the French and British, like the Americans before them, were reluctant to offer more than verbal promises of sovereignty. However, both Richards and Ha'alilio remained confident all three powers could be persuaded to sign a written agreement, and throughout April and May 1843 they continued to pursue contacts in London and Paris. Just when all seemed to be going so well, Richards happened to spy an item on 31 May in a Paris newspaper, describing how a British frigate, the *Carysfort*, under the command of Lord George Paulet, had arrived to capture the Hawaiian Islands.

While the Hawaiian envoys had been busy in Europe and Washington, Charlton and Alexander Simpson were preparing their final attempt to force the British annexation of Hawai'i. In September 1842, while on his way to London, Charlton is reported to have met Paulet on the Mexican coast and passed on to him his account of recent French naval activity in the Hawaiian Islands, including the arrival of the French sloop-of-war, the *Embuscade*, which had arrived to investigate continuing persecution of Catholics in Hawai'i. Paulet concurred with Charlton that the treaty signed by Lord Edward Russell in 1836 gave the British absolute rights of property and residence which could not be abrogated. Maintaining "paramount influence" in Hawai'i was interpreted by Paulet and other serving naval officers as preventing any other foreign power from achieving dominance.

It was in this climate of uncertainty about French ambitions and Hawaiian loyalties that the commander of the British Pacific Fleet, Rear-Admiral Richard Thomas, ordered the *Carysfort* to make for Honolulu and assist the acting British Consul in "Watching over and protecting the interests of British subjects."²⁹

Once the *Carysfort* dropped anchor at Honolulu, Alexander Simpson went on board to plan with Paulet the details of the English takeover. Simpson and Paulet formed a governing commission of Paulet, Duncan Forbes MacKay, and Lieutenant Frere of the *Carysfort*, and Kamehameha III or a deputy appointed by him. Day after day the Hawaiian King had to endure demand piled upon demand. On 25 February 1843 the Hawaiian flag was hauled down and the Union Jack raised. Island affairs during the five months of British occupation were characterized by a combination of posturing, insensitivity towards the native population, and a gradual usurpation of the King's remaining powers. Foreign trade dropped sharply as everyone waited to see how the drama would end.

To preserve the authority of the native administration, Dr. Judd resigned his advisory post as the King's deputy and hid the Hawaiian government's archives. Learning that Alexander Simpson intended to carry dispatches from Lord Paulet to England, Judd and the Hawaiian administration vowed that the other side of the story should be relayed to advise the outside world, to save the mission currently in Europe, and to preserve the Kingdom. Using a coffin in the Royal mausoleum as a writing desk, Judd prepared secret instructions for Richards and Ha'alilio, detailing injustices the Hawaiians were enduring at British hands. As fate would have it, the young American merchant, James F. B. Marshall, entrusted with Judd's letter, departed aboard the same ship as Alexander Simpson. Together they sailed eastward aboard an Hawaiian schooner renamed the *Albert*, each man secreting from the other his separate and distinct version of the English occupation.³⁰

Both accounts of events reached the Foreign Office in June 1843, and once more Lord Aberdeen was left to figure out what was happening in a place he could barely pick out on a map. On learning of the British coup, Aberdeen immediately sought to re-assure Richards and Ha'alilio that earlier British promises to recognize the Islands' independence would be upheld. The result was an agreement signed at Honolulu between Rear Admiral Thomas and the Hawaiian administration, restoring Hawaiian authority and their flag. The rights and privileges of British residents remained unchanged. Hawaii had at last rid herself of the haughty Charlton and the bothersome Alexander Simpson, but not of the constricting laws they upheld. Though the Hawaiian government had been restored, the terms it agreed to were essentially the same as those imposed by Paulet in February 1843. Much work remained to be done by

Richards and Ha'alilio in Europe to secure an unconditional agreement.³¹

Of assistance to the Hawaiian emissaries was the attention in Europe the Paulet episode had generated. In the summer and autumn of 1843 official opinion in London and Paris rushed to adopt a hands-off policy towards Hawai'i. Try as they might, imperialists such as Alexander Simpson in letters to the *Times* and in pamphlets could not push the British government to restore the British protectorate. She was currently too busy consolidating her position in New Zealand, just as the French had their hands full with their new acquisitions, the Marquesas and the Society Island chains.³² The French were inclined to support a tripartite pact among the U.S., France, and Britain, only if foreigners would be assured of special privileges such as trial by juries composed of Europeans and freedom of conscience to choose what system of laws they wished to be tried under.³³

In America Daniel Webster and the Tyler administration remained favorable towards the idea of Hawaiian independence, but upon their own terms, at a time of their choosing. The State Department stood firm and did not grant recognition to The Kingdom of Hawai'i until 1849.³⁴

During the month of September Aberdeen removed the final obstacles to the signing of an accord with France by agreeing to settle outstanding British claims beforehand. The British Foreign Secretary, with legal assistance, acted swiftly and agreed to appoint a new consul with powers to settle on behalf of Britain all outstanding issues including Charlton's land claim. On 8 November news reached London of Admiral Thomas' successful restoration of the Hawaiian government, and this information was transmitted to Paris by Ha'alilio. Events then moved speedily towards the signing on 13 November 1843 by Lord Aberdeen and the French ambassador, St. Aulaire, in London, of a joint declaration recognizing the existence of Hawai'i as an independent nation.³⁵

The accord was not a treaty. Either side could renounce its part of the bargain at any time with the stroke of a pen. It did not enjoy American support; and most crucially, the convention did nothing to engender a greater respect for Hawaiian laws nor to deal with the rampant speculation in Island land. The convention's great singular accomplishment, nationhood, however could not be denied, though it bestowed few immediate blessings upon the Hawaiian people and

hardly altered their relationships with foreigners at all. What the Hudson's Bay Company and the mission for independence did for Hawai'i was to raise its political and economic status onto a higher plane. This effectively eliminated gunboat diplomacy and whole-hearted attempts by European nations to annex the Islands. It was to take 50 years before American economic strength would finally bring the Hawaiian Kingdom down. In 1843, with danger lurking from within and without, Hawaiians found their friends where they could.

POSTSCRIPT

For the Hudson's Bay Company, Hawaiian independence proved a mixed blessing. It enhanced relations with the Hawaiian government, on whose behalf it had actively labored from February 1842 until May 1843, while continuing to operate as an English company. Less beneficial to the Company's interest was the furor the Hawaiian mission for independence and the Paulet affair had generated in the United States. Gradually the Hudson's Bay Company post, which Sir George Simpson had put such stock in, would be squeezed out of business as the American economic tide rolled into Hawai'i. In 1860, shortly before his death, the Hudson's Bay chief made the decision to close the Honolulu post.

On a personal level the mission for independence had been a triumph for Sir George Simpson. It consolidated further his already considerable control of the Hudson's Bay Company's operations in North America. Simpson was far from altruistic. Letters he wrote following his trip to Lāhainā show him to have been primarily, if not singularly, ambitious to gain advantages for his company. Unlike the traders in Hawai'i, who were preoccupied with local quarrels, or the diplomats abroad, who knew or cared little about that part of the world, Simpson was able to achieve a more constructive and comprehensive outlook on the situation than anyone before him.

The Hawaiian government was spared the indignity of political vassalage (economic subservience would prove more difficult to resist). American and British commercial relations were restored, and British and French imperial ambitions were diverted elsewhere. The Hawaiian Islands could return to their usual cycle of tropical calm, punctuated by frenzied activity when the traders and whalers called in.

NOTES

Abbreviations for documents seen in The British Public Record Office, London.

A Hudson's Bay Company document, microfilm.

Adm Admiralty document.

FO Foreign Office document.

¹ **Timoteo or Timothy Ha'alilo** (?-1844) was for many years private secretary to King Kamehameha III before joining the mission for independence. In this capacity he signed the lease which gave the H.B.C. its new location on 1 January 1840, at an annual rate of \$700. He helped to organize the first treasury records on 10 May 1842 and was involved in the negotiations over Ladd & Company's Belgian contract. Ha'alilo was just one of several promising young Native Hawaiian politicians who labored to incorporate Western ideas of government into the ancient Hawaiian system, Travel and the harsh weather of Britain and North America undermined his health and he died en route home from New York on 3 December 1844.

Rev. William Richards (1793-1847), an American, sailed for Lāhainā within a few weeks of his graduation in 1822 from Andover Theological Seminary, Massachusetts. For the rest of his life he served as preacher, teacher, and doctor. Fluent in Hawaiian, he was found to influence the creation of the Hawaiian Bill of Rights 1839, the Constitution of 1840, and in all statutes enacted between 1838 and 1842. Richards, as a member of the mission, remained in Europe until 1845, trying, unsuccessfully, to get Britain and France to improve the terms of Hawaiian independence. Although he discovered a talent as a diplomat, the strain of his mission and later career as land commissioner and Minister of Public Instruction in Hawai'i proved too great a burden on his health, and he died in 1847 at the age of 54.

Sir George Simpson, the Scottish-born illegitimate son of George Simpson, joined the H.B.C. in 1820 and advanced through the ranks to become head of the Company's Northern Department. He was appointed Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land in 1839. A rigorous task master, he himself habitually worked 18-hour days and was 50 years of age when he made his voyage round the world. He remained in almost total command of H.B.C. operations in Northern America until his death near Montreal in 1878. The most complete account of Simpson's life is in John S. Galbraith, *The Little Emperor* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1976).

² Secret instructions to Lord Byron, 14 Sept. 1824, Adm. 2/1693.

³ Sir Robert Peel, letter to Edward Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby, 30 Dec. 1841, ms. 30467, vol. CCLXXVII, fol. (10) 154-155, British Library.

⁴ George Hamilton-Gordon, fourth Earl of Aberdeen (1784-1860), was Foreign Secretary from September 1841 to July 1846. Lord Aberdeen, letter to Sir George Simpson and William Richardson, April 1843, FO 58/18, fol. 27-31.

⁵ Alexander Simpson, *The Sandwich Islands: Progress of Events since their Discovery by Captain Cook*. . . (London: South, Elder, 1843) 20.

⁶ Disputes and claims involving foreigners up to 1840 are dealt with at length in Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, 1778-1854 *Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1938); Harold Whitman Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii, The Pioneers 1789-1843* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1942); Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of The Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1968).

⁷ E. E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin From Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Second Series, 1839-1844* (London: Champlain Society for the Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1943) 4.

⁸ A Company trader, Duncan Finlayson, who visited Honolulu in 1833, described the social routine:

The foreign residents about 600 in number, do not lead the most temperate lives—you begin to drink spirits in the mor'g and the affair is continued throughout the day and night, with relays of other liquors, until nature becomes exhausted and sinks into insensibility . . . the consequence is, the missionaries and they (the foreign residents) are at variance . . . : G. P. de T. Glazebrook, ed., *The Hargrave Correspondence* (privately published) 105.

⁹ Governor and Committee, letter to George Pelly, London, 6 Sept. 1841, A6/25, fol. 270.

¹⁰ Lord John Russell, letter to Sir John Pelly, 16 Feb. 1842, CO42/485. Lord John Russell (1792–1878) was Secretary for War and the Colonies 1839–1841 and Prime Minister 1846–1852.

¹¹ Since 1826 Charlton had held possession of a prime piece of land near the waterfront at Honolulu, not far from H.B.C.'s premises, and a parcel of land in town known as Beretania (Hawaiian for Brittainia). These plots were given to Charlton by the Hawaiian Crown in thanks for Britain returning the bodies of the Royal couple in 1824. In 1840 the British consul presented a document to Kekuanaoa, Governor of O'ahu, purporting to show Charlton's entitlement to an additional acre and a half of choice waterfront property adjacent to that which he already held. The Hawaiian Government contested this demand, 13 years after the alleged grant, on the grounds of insufficient evidence. See Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, 207. The new consul, General William Miller, tried to obtain a settlement in Charlton's favor, but the last decision rendered by the Hawaiian courts in August 1847 was unfavorable. Charlton, who had returned to Hawai'i in 1844 to pursue his case, left the Islands forever in 1846, leaving only a scattering of property and much ill-feeling behind.

¹² George Pelly, letter to Sir George Simpson, Honolulu, 2 Nov. 1842, FO 58/18.

¹³ Petition dated 24 Sept. 1842, FO 58/17, fol. 3–6; FO 27/663.

¹⁴ Pelly was described as "a man of harsh and repulsive manners and the most obtrusive John Bullism," by A. Simpson, *The Sandwich Islands* 48. See, too, Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany 1670–1870* (Winnepeg, Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1973) 228.

¹⁵ Alexander Simpson, *The Life and Travels of Thomas Simpson the Arctic Discoverer* (London: Smith, Elder, 1845) 338–390.

¹⁶ Sir George Simpson, *Narrative of Journey Round the World During the Years 1841–1842*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1847) 2: 158.

¹⁷ Of significance was a plan by Peter Brinsmade of Ladd and Company, sugar producer, to develop all the unoccupied lands in the Kingdom. The King was to be the principal subscriber, and investors from all nations would be welcomed to participate in the scheme. A clause in the agreement between Ladd and Company and Kamehameha III stipulated that the contract would only operate if Hawaiian independence were achieved. In May 1843 a subsidiary called the "Royal Community of the Sandwich Islands" was set up, with the Belgian Government offering \$200,000 to finance large scale settlement of Hawai'i. The plan collapsed in 1845 when the King's missionary advisors learned that Ladd and Company planned to settle the Islands with Belgian Catholics. The company sued the Hawaiian Government for breach of contract and \$378,000, a suit they later withdrew. See Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, 189, and Daws, *Shoal of Time* 122–123.

¹⁸ Governors were officially named in 1846, and it is unclear to whom Simpson was referring. As Richards' capabilities as a diplomat grew more apparent, Simpson's initial opinion changed, and the two became close friends: *American Historical Review* 14 (October 1908): 93; Glyndwr Williams, *London Correspondence Inward from Sir George Simpson 1841–1842*, appendices C and D Lond: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1973) 151–152.

- ¹⁹ Sir George Simpson, *Narrative of a Journey Round the World* . . . vol. 2, 158. Doubts have been raised as to the authorship of this book. Material cited here is only that which matches contemporary accounts elsewhere. For further details on Simpson's book, see Williams, *London Correspondence Inwards* . . . 184-196.
- ²⁰ Sir George Simpson, letter to W. M. Richards, 1 April 1842, enclosure in Gerritt P. Judd, letter to Richards, Honolulu, 10 Sept. 1842, AH.
- ²¹ Williams, *London Correspondence Inwards* . . . 156-158.
- ²² Kenneth E. Shewmaker, ed., *The Papers of Daniel Webster*, vol. 1, *Diplomatic Papers 1841-1843* (Hanover, N.H.: UP of New England, 1983-) 869.
- ²³ Shewmaker, ed., *Papers of Daniel Webster* . . . vol. 1, 871.
- ²⁴ Lord Aberdeen, letter to Richard Charlton, 9 March 1843, FO 58/17 fol. 49-51; Alexander Simpson, *The Sandwich Islands* 59.
- ²⁵ Gerrit P. Judd, letter to William Richards and Sir George Simpson, 18 Oct. 1842, FO 58/18, fol. 1-6.
- ²⁶ Sir George Simpson and W. M. Richards, letter to Lord Aberdeen, 6 March 1843, FO 58/18, fol. 25-26.
- ²⁷ Lord Cowley (British Ambassador in Paris), letter to Lord Aberdeen, 20 March 1843, FO 27/666; Richards wrote on 3 April, "The news of the taking of Tahiti reached Paris the same day we did, and had a great tendency to forward our object," Kuykendall. *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, 198.
- ²⁸ Lord Aberdeen, letter to Sir George Simpson and W. M. Richards, 1 April 1843, FO 58/18, fol. 27-32, AH.
- ²⁹ Admiral Richard Thomas, letter to Lord George Paulet, San Blas, 18 Jan. 1843, fol. 163, Adm. 1/5531.
- ³⁰ Lord George Paulet, letter to Secretary of the Admiralty, 9 March 1843, and BPRO Admiralty, 18 June 1843. See Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, 214-215, Kamehameha III, letter to Queen Victoria, 10 March 1843, signed by Kamehameha, Kekauluohi, and James F. B. Marshall, FO 58/18, fol. 44.
- ³¹ Declaration signed by Kamehameha III, Kekauluohi, Richards, and Thomas, 23 July 1843, *Documents Relating to the Restoration of the Sandwich Islands Flag*, pamphlet in Hawaiian and English, 1-21; *The [London] Times*, 27 June 1843.
- ³² Lord Aberdeen, letter to Lord Cowley, 21 July 1843, FO 27/663; British Library, add. ms. 43163, vol. 125, fol. 94.
- ³³ Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom* vol. 1, 201.
- ³⁴ H. S. Fox, British Ambassador in Washington, D. C., letter to Lord Aberdeen, 13 June 1843, noted hostile press reaction to Paulet's action: "The American newspapers with very few exceptions, are filled with . . . vehemently abusive articles against Great Britain": FO 5/392, no. 80.
- ³⁵ The Convention signed at London was ratified by the Hawaiian Government in Lāhainā on 12 February 1844. It contained essentially the same liberal protections for foreigners and limitations on the Hawaiian monarchy, as had been forced on King Kamehameha III by Captain C. P. T. Laplace in 1839 and Paulet in 1843. Lord Aberdeen, draft of the Convention, to General William Miller, 29 Sept. 1843, FO 58/21, fol. 2, 4-29; Lord Aberdeen, instructions to General William Miller, 28 Sept. 1843, FO 58/21. Declaration signed in English and French by Lord Aberdeen and Louis Clair de Beaupoil, Comte de Sainte-Aulaire, in London, 28 Nov. 1843, FO 93/ 33/40A.